
Texas Commission on Fire Protection
Report on Customer Service Surveys, 2010

Submitted June 1, 2010

Table of Contents

Identification of customers	5
Survey development	6
Survey response analysis	7
Survey tool analysis	15
Customer service performance measures	15
Customer service performance measures definitions.....	16

Identification of customers

For the purpose of the commission's 2010 Customer Satisfaction Survey, the following groups reflect customers served by strategies in the 2009-10 General Appropriations Act.

Goal 1: Education & Assistance

Strategy A.1.1.: Fire Safety Information & Education Programs

CUSTOMER: Fire departments (chiefs, training officers and other officers, fire protection personnel), schools and universities, state agencies, industries, local governments, businesses, training academies, general public.

SERVICE PROVIDED: Acquire, develop and maintain current and historical information on fire protection and provide training aids and fire protection information to fire departments and other entities. Attendance and presentations at the conferences hosted by state fire protection associations; utilization of exhibit booth at conferences; instruction in field examinations, and commission rules and regulations.

Goal 2: Fire Department Standards

Strategy B.1.1.: Certify & Regulate Fire Service

CUSTOMER: Fire departments and local governments.

SERVICE PROVIDED: Certify and regulate fire departments and fire service personnel according to standards adopted by the agency and as prescribed by statute. Regulate paid fire protection personnel, fire departments and training facilities. Perform biennial inspection of fire departments, local government agencies providing fire protection, and institutions or facilities conducting training for fire protection personnel or recruits. Establish minimum curriculum requirements for basic certification as fire protection personnel. Establish minimum requirements and evaluation of courses for higher levels of fire protection personnel certification. Enforce standards for protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus. Administer a voluntary certification and regulation program for qualified individuals not connected with local governments or volunteer fire departments. Administer a voluntary certification and regulation program for volunteer fire protection personnel, fire departments and training facilities.

Survey development

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection developed a survey to measure statutorily required customer service quality elements (i.e., facilities, staff, communications, Internet sites, complaint-handling processes, service timeliness, and printed information). For 2010, the agency conducted the survey online during April 2010. The agency did not conduct a survey in FY09.

To allow random selection of customers, a link to the survey was prominently displayed on the agency's home page. The agency also published a link to the survey on its Facebook page.

The commission's customer satisfaction survey groups the statutorily required customer service quality elements into four major groups, as follows:

Agency facilities

- Accessibility
- Location

Quality of Service

- Courtesy
- Knowledge

Ability to communicate

- Telephone
- Mail
- E-mail
- Response time
- Internet site
 - Ease of access
 - Ease of use
 - Value of information
- Written materials
 - Manuals
 - Forms

Complaint procedures

- Ease of filing
- Timeliness of response

Customers are asked to rank each of the above areas on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" indicating "very dissatisfied" and "5" indicating "very satisfied." An additional checkbox allows customers to indicate whether the category in question is not applicable. (Non-applicable responses are not included in the calculations.)

A copy of the survey form is included as Appendix A of this report.

Survey response analysis

Overall, the results indicate a high satisfaction rate among the agency's customers. In the 2010 survey, the average satisfaction scores for all areas is 3.95 on a 5.0 scale, where a "4" equals "satisfied" and a "5" means "very satisfied."

Customer satisfaction scores have taken a slight downturn over the last biennium.

In past years, agency customers ranked the agency as "very satisfied" for staff courtesy and knowledge, key indicators of an agency-wide customer service orientation. In this year's survey, those scores slipped into the "satisfied" range, at 4.14 for "knowledge" and 4.21 for "courtesy." The percentage scores confirm this finding, slipping to just under 80 percent for the first time in the agency's survey history; in previous iterations of the survey, just over 90 percent of survey respondents were satisfied with the agency in those two key customer service indicators.

Four of fifteen measures earned "satisfied" ratings from more than 80 percent of survey respondents in 2010, and seven measures earned "satisfied" ratings from 70 to 80 percent of respondents. No measures earned a "satisfied" rating from fewer than 50 percent of respondents.

Although the level of satisfaction remains high for a state government agency, the agency is concerned that the marked drop-off in scores over the last biennium could be warning flags that its ability to provide quality customer service in the face of continually increasing workloads while its budget is repeatedly diminished has begun to reach its limits.

Key findings - overall

1. The commission continues to earn "satisfied" ratings in all categories, although the overall scores and ratings have dropped more in the last biennium than it ever has in the past ten years.
2. As in our previous customer satisfaction survey reports, low response rate and the possibility of non-response bias continues to be a concern. Although the repetition over time of a similar format, with similar distribution methods, provides an accurate "over time" analysis of a similar customer base, the potential for non-response bias could indicate that these results may not accurately reflect overall customer attitudes.
3. The general trend in satisfaction between the 2010 survey and previous surveys is negative.

The commission analyzes the responses in a number of ways, including examining the raw scores and the percentages of satisfied and dissatisfied customers. The scores and a brief analysis of each section follows.

Findings - specific areas

Each section includes the raw scores and percent of satisfied and dissatisfied customers, the changes between years, and a positive/negative trend key.

The ratings are determined on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "very dissatisfied" and 5 indicating "very satisfied."

Percentages of satisfied customers are determined by dividing the number of customers choosing "satisfied" or "very satisfied" by the total number of respondents to a particular question. Similarly, the percentage of dissatisfied customers is determined by dividing the number of customers choosing "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" by the total number of respondents.

The "trend key" is a simple visual indicator showing whether the agency's performance improved or declined from the previous survey. Arrows pointing up indicate better performance, while downward-pointing arrows indicate performance declines. (The key is reversed for the "percent dissatisfied" rating, because an increase in this percentage indicates a higher percentage of dissatisfied customers, which is a *negative* result.)

Satisfaction with agency facilities

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Accessibility	4.24	4.15	4.02	-0.13	↓
Location	4.08	3.89	3.56	-0.33	↓
<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Accessibility	84%	79%	80%	1%	↑
Location	76%	68%	56%	-12%	↓
<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Accessibility	3%	9%	8%	-1%	↑
Location	4%	10%	14%	4%	↓

Customer satisfaction with the accessibility and location of the agency have consistently trended downward since the agency's move to its downtown Austin location. Apart from the agency's complaint filing scores, the agency's location received the lowest overall customer satisfaction score.

Satisfaction with quality of service received from staff members

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Courtesy	4.61	4.54	4.14	-0.40	↓
Knowledge	4.57	4.51	4.21	-0.30	↓
<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Courtesy	93%	92%	79%	-13%	↓
Knowledge	94%	91%	77%	-14%	↓
<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Courtesy	4%	4%	11%	7%	↓
Knowledge	4%	7%	9%	2%	↓

Roughly seven out of ten of the commission's customers responded that they are satisfied with the agency's courtesy and knowledge, but there is cause for concern since these scores have dropped more than ten percent from previous surveys.

Satisfaction with the agency's ability to communicate

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Telephone	4.26	4.22	3.95	-0.27	↓
Mail	4.29	4.29	3.80	-0.49	↓
E-Mail	4.31	4.3	3.74	-0.56	↓
Response time	4.24	4.25	3.69	-0.56	↓

<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Telephone	87%	86%	80%	-6%	↓
Mail	89%	88%	74%	-14%	↓
E-Mail	85%	85%	70%	-15%	↓
Response time	85%	84%	67%	-17%	↓

<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Telephone	7%	6%	15%	9%	↓
Mail	5%	5%	9%	4%	↓
E-Mail	3%	5%	20%	15%	↓
Response time	7%	9%	16%	7%	↓

Customer satisfaction with the agency's ability to communicate, particularly in its written correspondence (both mail and e-mail), along with satisfaction with the agency's response time, have declined since previous customer satisfaction surveys.

Satisfaction with the agency's internet site

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Ease of access	4.42	4.45	4.40	-0.05	↓
Ease of use	4.32	4.41	4.18	-0.23	↓
Value of information	4.41	4.42	4.24	-0.18	↓
<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Ease of access	91%	91%	93%	2%	↑
Ease of use	88%	91%	84%	-7%	↓
Value of information	91%	90%	87%	-3%	↓
<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Ease of access	2%	5%	4%	-1%	↑
Ease of use	4%	5%	7%	2%	↓
Value of information	3%	5%	7%	2%	↓

The agency's internet scores appear to dropping slightly, though not as dramatically as in other customer service areas. The overall rating and percentage of satisfied customers have declined slightly. The "ease of access" ratings earned the agency's overall highest satisfaction scores.

Satisfaction with the agency's printed materials

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Manuals	4.33	4.32	3.96	-0.36	↓
Forms	4.30	4.28	4.08	-0.20	↓
<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Manuals	90%	89%	73%	-16%	↓
Forms	89%	88%	79%	-9%	↓
<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Manuals	3%	2%	8%	6%	↓
Forms	4%	3%	8%	5%	↓

The trendline in the scores for the agency's manuals and forms appear to follow the general downward trend of the overall scores.

Satisfaction with the agency's complaint filing process

<u>Average ratings</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Ease of filing	3.88	4	3.29	-0.71	↓
Response timeliness	3.84	4	3.33	-0.67	↓

<u>Percent satisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Trend
Ease of filing	66%	79%	53%	-26%	↓
Response timeliness	64%	75%	75%	0%	-

<u>Percent dissatisfied</u>					
	FY00-05	FY08-09	FY10	Change from previous	Reverse Trend
Ease of filing	10%	9%	29%	20%	↓
Response timeliness	10%	9%	9%	0%	-

The small number of respondents to this area tends to skew the results of these measures; very few of the survey respondents have indicated that they have filed a complaint with the agency.

Survey tool analysis

Although as previously noted the small response rate could potentially indicate a strong non-response bias in the surveys, the relative consistency in the data over the years seems to indicate that the sampling is not fundamentally flawed. (The exception to this could be in the area of complaint handling, where the small number of respondents means that overly positive or overly negative results could skew the percentages significantly.)

For the FY2010 survey period, the agency targeted a random sample of agency customers by conducting the survey only online.

In past iterations of the survey, the agency has targeted one category of users by directing the survey to fire department training officers. Training officers are generally more familiar with the range of services the agency provides.

Approaches under consideration for future surveys include distributing the survey to certification exam takers, departments undergoing inspection, etc. This approach would be extremely difficult, however, without dedicating more agency staff specifically to the task of performing the surveys.

This agency's governing bodies, including the commission itself and its advisory committees, are comprised primarily of members of the community the agency serves. These groups provide continuous oversight and feedback regarding the agency's activities. Although objectivity might be a factor given these members' involvement in the rulemaking processes, some method of quantifying satisfaction levels among these groups could provide additional insights regarding the agency's customer satisfaction performance.

Customer Service Performance Measures	FY 2010 Performance
Outcome Percent of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	75%
Outcome Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	50%
Output Number of Customers Surveyed	58
Output Number of Customers Served	27,000
Efficiency Cost Per Customer Surveyed	N/A
Explanatory Number of Customers Identified	27,000
Explanatory Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	11

Customer service performance measures definitions

Outcome: Percentage of surveyed customer respondents expressing overall satisfaction with services received.

Short Definition: Surveyed customers are offered an opportunity to rate several factors pertaining to the agency. The rating scale included five response selections from "Very dissatisfied" to "Very satisfied" or "Not Applicable."

Purpose/Importance: The purpose of the survey is to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 1563. While meeting this requirement, the survey will offer the agency an opportunity to augment its understanding of customer needs and expectations.

Source/Collection of Data: Surveys were mailed to fire departments with annual renewal statements. In addition, staff members distributed surveys to each person with whom contact was made.

Method of Calculation: The overall satisfaction rating is the average of the percentages for each category measures in the survey. For calculating the percentages, the "percent satisfied" is the number of respondents who marked "4" (satisfied) or "5" (very satisfied), divided by the number of respondents to each question. (Non-respondents were not included in the calculation of percentages.)

Data Limitations: The results of the survey are limited to the number of surveys returned.

Calculation Type: Non-Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

Outcome: Percentage of surveyed customer respondents identifying ways to improve service delivery.

Definition: The percentage of surveyed customer respondents who identified ways to improve service delivery expressed as a ratio of surveys returned to surveys containing suggestions.

Purpose/Importance: The customers receiving the service afforded by the agency are the best judges of how they would like to receive that service. Responses and suggestions from our customers encourage an open dialog that will result in better customer service and may result in more efficient methods of delivery.

Collection of Data: Surveys were posted to the agency's web site in April 2010.

Method of Calculation: For calculating the percentages, the "percent suggesting improvement" is the number of respondents who made comments, divided by the total number of respondents.

Data Limitations: Survey results are limited to the number of surveys voluntarily completed by customers.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative

New Measure : No

Desired Performance: Lower than Target (assuming good customer satisfaction).

Output: Number of customers surveyed.

Short Definition: The number of surveys distributed to agency customers

Purpose/Importance: A wide range of distribution and a large number of customers reached will afford the agency an excellent opportunity to poll the expectations of the customers.

Collection of Data: Surveys were posted to the agency's web site in April 2010.

Method of Calculation: The number of responses.

Data Limitations: The survey respondents are self-selected, and limited to visitors to the agency's website or Facebook page in April 2010.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure : Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

Output: Number of customers served.

Short Definition: This measure defines the various customer bases served by the agency.

Purpose/Importance: Determination of the customer bases allows the agency to allocate its time and resources to the specific needs of the specific groups served.

Collection of Data: Customers served was determined by agency employees who listed the various people and entities served during a one-week period. This information was compiled into specific categories of customers.

Method of Calculation: Identified the number of certified fire fighters, library users, fire departments inspected/investigated, fire service training programs evaluated, and people tested.

Data Limitations: Data is limited to those individuals or entities specifically regulated by the agency. Customers not regulated cannot be anticipated.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Not Applicable

Efficiency: Cost per customers surveyed.

Short Definition: The cost of printing, business reply permit and mailing customer surveys.

Purpose/Importance: Determine the cost of surveying the agency customers.

Collection of Data: Cost was determined by tracking the invoices for printing, business reply permit, and postage.

Method of Calculation: Cost per customer was calculated by dividing the total cost by the customers surveyed.

Data Limitations: Data is limited to known cost.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Not Applicable

Explanatory: Number of customers identified.

Short Definition: The number of people served by the agency.

Purpose/Importance: To survey for customer satisfaction.

Collection of Data: Number of customers were determined by agency employees who listed the various people and entities served. This information was compiled into specific categories of customers.

Method of Calculation: Identified the total number of certified fire fighters, library users, fire departments inspected/investigated, fire service training programs evaluated, and people tested based on FY10 data.

Data Limitations: Data is limited to those individuals or entities specifically regulated by the agency. Customers not regulated cannot be anticipated.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Not Applicable

Explanatory: Number of customer groups inventoried.

Short Definition: This measure defines the various customer groups served by the agency.

Purpose/Importance: Determination of the customer groups allows the agency to allocate its time and resources to the specific needs of the specific groups served.

Collection of Data: Groups served was determined from input from the agency employees.

Method of Calculation: Totaled the groups reported by the employees.

Data Limitations: Data is limited to those groups identified by the employees.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Not Applicable

